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MALCOLM MATHESON

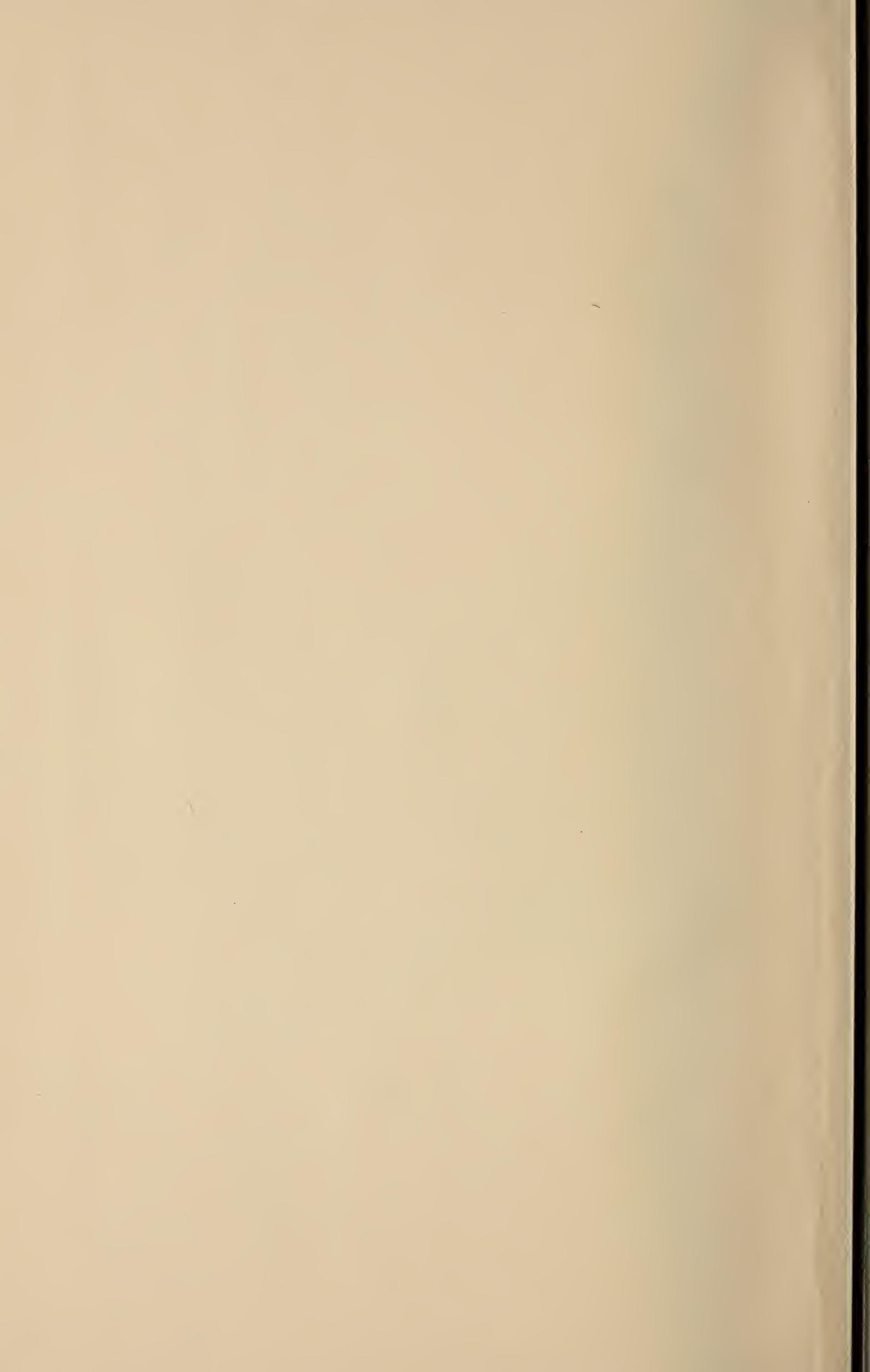


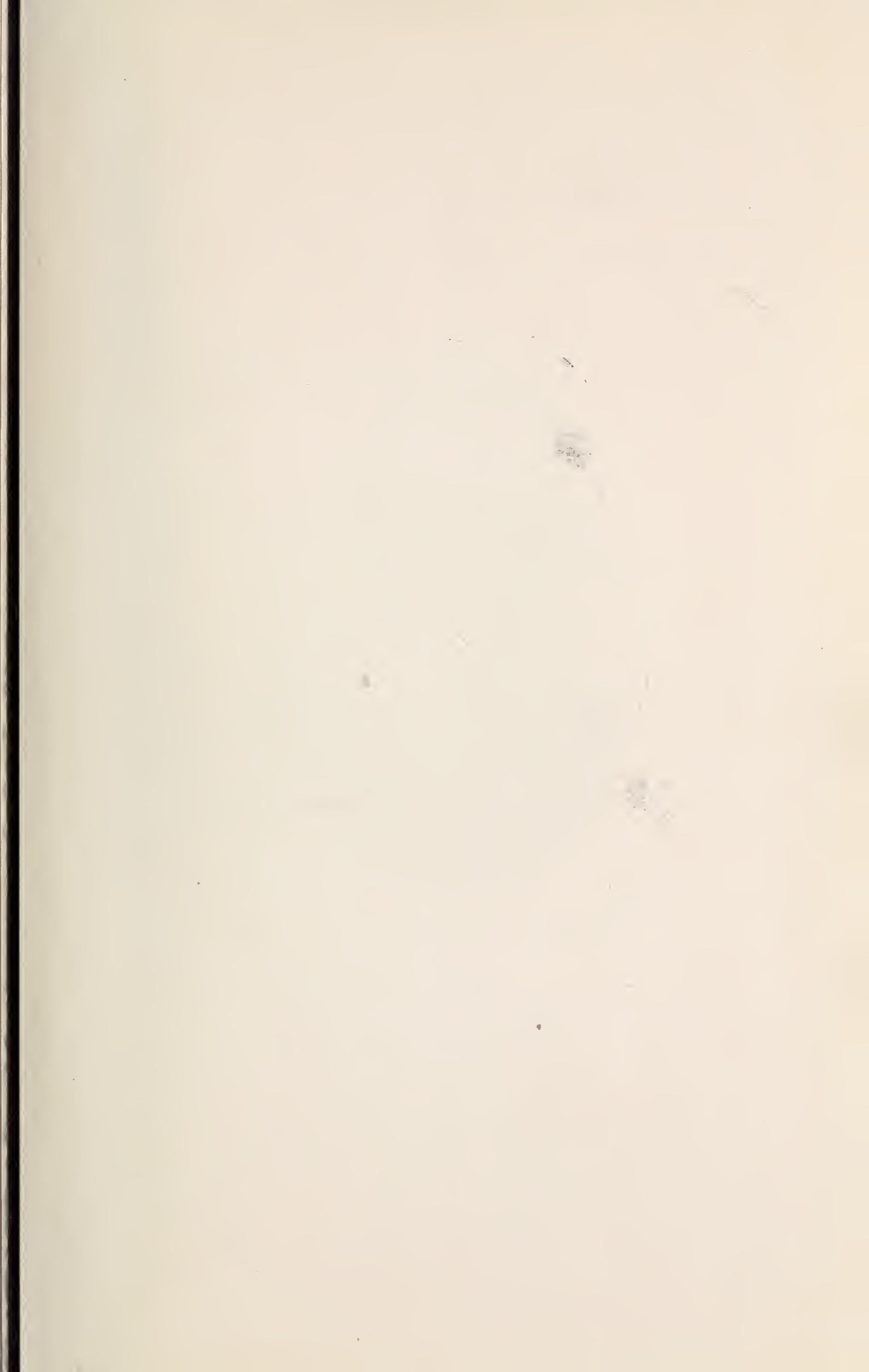
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MALCOLM MATHESON, B. D., PH. D.

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*The Young Man Who Considered the
Price Too Great*

MALCOLM MATHESON, B. D., PH. D.



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Matthew 19:16-22.

"And behold, one came to him and said, Teacher, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, why asketh thou me concerning that which is good? One there is who is good. But if thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, which? And Jesus said, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honor thy father and thy mother; and, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I observed: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that which thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. But when the young man heard the saying, he went away sorrowful; for he was one that had great possessions."

Mark 10:17-22.

"And as he was going forth into the way, there ran one to him, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good save one, even God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor thy father and mother. And he said unto him, Teacher, all these things have I observed from my youth. And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. But his countenance fell at the saying, and he went away sorrowful: for he was one that had great possessions."

PAYING THE PRICE

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The Young Man Who Considered the Price Too Great

THE master passion of a man's life is that center around which all his conduct, character and life radiate. The dominant factor in a man's life is that to which everything else in his life is subservient. In every man's character there is a point which rules; and to which everything else is brought for comparison and settlement. If a man makes the accumulation of wealth the dominant factor, and master passion of his life, everything is brought to that pivotal point in his life and character for comparison, judgment and final settlement. ^DAlexander the Great made the conquest of the world the master passion of his life. He felt that this was the greatest thing in all the world for man to aim at. He realized his dream; but, alas, I see him weeping that the end of his wonderful achievements was at hand; he filled a premature grave from reckless living, and his master conquests crumbled into divided empires. Napoleon started out to terrorize all the world. The idol and ruling passion of his life was world conquest and great earthly achievements. He stood upon the island of St. Helena stripped of all his

wonderful achievements, and felt deep down in his heart that there was after all a better road in life to travel than that over which he had passed. Caesar said, the world is mine. The boundaries of great empires trembled under the tread of his foot. The peasant regarded him as a god, worthy of the worship of the noblest elements in man. But he fell, a victim to the assassin's blade, and I hear him whispering down the aisles of time "vanity of vanities" is written across the face of all my great glories; and my tracks across the sandy desert of time will soon be filled in by the breeze from the receding chain of years.³ The Man of Galilee appeared from amongst the peasantry of the orient. There was a master passion, and a pivotal point in His character around which radiated His entire life. It was not the material conquest of the world, nor the accumulation of the treasures of earth; but ~~the~~ ^{the} foundation ^{love for a sinful man,} love to God, and service to man. Traveling upon this foundation, with this center around which His entire life radiated, He began to rise, the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His beams. He crossed the expanse of time like a meteor leaving a trail of brightness as He traveled. He diffuses a transforming influence that is molding the world, and changing the old planet into a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

This young man came to Jesus Christ with a clear conception formed of what he considered the greatest thing in all the world. The pivotal point, and master passion of his life was, the accumulation of wealth; seasoned by an ethical material conception of things religious. Wordly prosperity was the uppermost thing in all his life; with religion merely a parasite growing upon the boughs thereof. He desired to have other things besides worldly accumulations; but earthly possessions were to him the foundation qualities of excellence. All other things must be subservient to this central factor in his life and character. He came where Jesus Christ was and asked: "what must I do to inherit eternal life." He had splendid religious aspirations; a favorable inclination towards things divine; so he asked this question. Jesus told him that there was one thing he would have to do, and that was, to change the pivotal point, or master passion of his life. That he would have to put the things of God and heaven in place of his passion for the accumulation of earthly possessions. In substance he deliberately made answer that the price was entirely too great; he went away sad of countenance, and is never heard from again.

Let us consider this young man's life from various points of view. From the earliest possible conception that we can legitimately form of him, let

us follow him until he came to the climax, when he made the great refusal because he considered the price too great, and vanished forever from sight.

FIRST STAGE SELF-SUFFICIENCY

THE first stage in this young man's life was that of self-sufficiency. There evidently was a time when he felt that he lacked nothing. Because of his possessions, he no doubt enjoyed a goodly measure of popularity among his associates, which led him to lose sight of the weaknesses and short comings peculiar to the entire human race; but more especially to the young man full of life, and surrounded by bright prospects for the future. To guard against a similar weakness, every young man starting out in life would do well to remember the boundaries and limitations of life. That regardless of social standing, prospects, and opportunities these limitations enter into all the fields of human activities; and the wise man will always guard against becoming enslaved to the idea of self-sufficiency. One of the great things in life for a young man to guard against is, that of losing self-reliance and self-confidence. These two noble qualifications gone, the young man at once becomes a weakling. Without these two, the spirit is caged, ability concealed, and talents lie buried never to be quickened. Many a young man has become a weakling in this respect because of snubbery of bombastic unworthy associates. Under such circumstances, nine cases out

of every ten, failure is written in very bold type across the future which otherwise might have been a bright career. He is doomed to failure unless by a kind turn of providence he is able to surmount and regain his original natural standing with his inherent qualifications. Self-reliance and self-confidence do not mean a feeling of self-sufficiency and of lacking nothing. One of the most dangerous positions in a young man's life is, to become perfectly satisfied with one's self. There can be no growth, nor progress in such a life. The ideal condition is, for the young man to see mountain peaks towering high above him which are as yet unmastered and unconquered; and, with the proper degree of self-confidence and self-reliance; calling God into co-operation to start out and scale these towering heights. At this stage of self-sufficiency in this young man's life, he was blind to the boundaries and limitations of humanity. Great facts were towering about him upon all sides, but he could not see that there was any necessity for him to feel other than that he was upon the right track in life. He thus reminds us of the young man acting as Elisha's servant. The enemy surrounded the city, and the young man felt that all was ended. The prophet prayed God to open his eyes that he might see. He saw the mountains full of horses and chariots he never heard of be-

fore. I shall characterize this first stage of this young man's life as a condition of blindness; or the inability to see the error of making earthly possessions the master passion of his life, and turning his back upon God because his limited vision considered the price too great. I invite the young man into a consideration of a few of the things which may lead to this blindness in life.

First:—Blindness, as a logical consequence of inherent natural weakness. Because of this inherent natural weakness peculiar to humanity in all the ages, it is the part of wisdom for the young man to be always asking the question—am I right; and to give due consideration to the judgments and opinions of others. Man is constantly acquiring knowledge through the senses, which have their boundaries and limitations definitely set, and nature is constantly saying, thus far shalt thou go but no further. Man's ear is an avenue of great convenience in life; as well as to enable him to learn through sound the grandeur and magnificence of the world of nature. But sound a note beyond thirty-eight thousand vibrations per second and the ear is useless, for at that stage sound becomes a blank to the ear. At the distance of nine miles the horizon closes in upon the eye. In so far as the eye is concerned man is blind to everything beyond that distance reaching out into that mar-

velous space terminating in the outskirts of the universe. The scientist informs us that the analyzed ray of light reveals the seven colors to the eye; but that there are all indications to show that there are other divisions of the same ray of light which are beyond the power of the human eye to grasp in its present stage of development. The whole universe is but a collection of facts and truths; and in so far as knowledge thereof is concerned, man is a child playing with the pebbles upon the shore of the mighty ocean. I ask the farmer to tell me how the grain of corn develops into the great stock and full ear. He shows me the family to which it belongs; its stock, stamens and pistils, and the particular way in which it is fertilized. I ask the biologist to explain; and he talks learnedly of protoplasm, homologous organs and primitive types. I ask the chemist; and he shows me the chemically analyzed contents of the developed seed securely placed in bottles and each bottle labeled its chemical contents. The astronomer points to the sun and says that it takes the whole solar system to cause a single ear of corn to grow. But when I ask them all to explain its life principle, and the hidden mystery of its growth, they all make answer, that that is beyond the boundaries and limitations of man's power to know. The blade of grass is a little laboratory constantly tak-

ing in the Carbon-Dioxide from the atmosphere, retaining the carbon and sending the purified oxygen back into the atmosphere for us to breathe. When I ask for an explanation as to how this is done by the plant, man stands helpless, confessing that he is blind. One of the leading educators of the United States, in a popular lecture relates the experience of a Massachusetts young man, who sold his farm as being worthless. This young man was a bright college student. He received fair remuneration for tutoring during the advanced period of his college course. At graduation, he was offered a professorship by the college at a splendid salary. He was the only boy of a widowed mother with whom he lived on her farm. He declined the generous offer from the college, and insisted upon the mother to sell the farm, and go "west" with him where he would have an opportunity to prospect among the silver and gold mines of the western hills. This done, like the young man of our scripture narrative, he vanished and is never heard from again. In the meantime, the man who bought the farm discovered in a stone wall near the barn a block of native silver eight inches square. "Here was a hundred thousand dollars right down here just for the taking." The young man was going up and down the world looking for that very thing upon which his eyes fell every day.

as he walked by on his way to the college. The lecturer's teaching is, that right underneath our feet there are fortunes as great as that of the far distance if we only had eyes to see and ears to hear. Every day in the year, young men are walking by doors that lead to fortune, because of the boundaries and limitations of man's perceiving powers.

Because of blindness, as a logical consequence of inherent weakness; Shakespeare died unappreciated by his own age. It was left for a future generation, three hundred years after his death, to have the scales fall from their eyes and realize that a wonderful thinker and writer had lived sometime in the past. Abraham Lincoln was unappreciated, and with great struggling fought his way to the heights, only to be severely criticized, and finally meet the assassin's blade. It was left for a rising generation, in the following century to encase the log cabin of his birth in marble of exquisite beauty. Cromwell, the great English statesman, was buried in Westminster Abby, but soon afterwards his body was dragged out of its sepulchre and hanged in ridicule. For nearly two hundred years he was execrated, until a wiser generation with greater perceiving powers, recognized him as the man of iron who destroyed despotism in England, and laid the foundations upon which

world democracy is building today. In the year 1899 a monument was erected to his memory in Westminster Abby. Mozart, the leading musician of his age, and one of the greatest that ever lived, died unrecognized and unappreciated. One morning a friend came into his home and found Mozart and his young wife waltzing around the room to keep warm, for the fuel was all gone and the pocketbook was empty. He worked beyond his physical endurance trying to make ends meet; he composed master productions, but a blear-eyed age in gawkness looked on and failed to see anything but an ordinary man with extreme musical notions. Caused by poverty, enmity and disappointment, on December 5th, 1791, at the age of thirty-seven, he died from a broken spirit. Early the next day his body was hurried, in a drizzling rain, to its last resting place. He was buried in a pauper's grave on the outside of the city of Vienna. One hundred years afterwards, the world began to realize that a Mozart had lived. Then the city of Vienna voted a magnificent sum for the erection of a monument to mark his last resting place, and to claim the honor of his citizenship. Today, if you visit that pauper's field your attention would be attracted by this splendid monument. But, alas, as you read the inscription thereon, upon the base thereof you would find these

words: "The probable site of Mozart's grave." "The blindness which caused the young man who came to Jesus from seeing was caused by the same inherent weakness that has led the great multitude to travel the same path ever since. Jesus Christ was regarded as a Jewish peasant, and an imposter turning divinity into a mockery. He was sadly misunderstood; sorely persecuted; and was at last ignominiously crucified; but destined to loom up as the most sublime figure of all the ages, and at last recognized by the whole world as the Son of God. Their eyes were holden from inherent natural weakness; they denounced His claims to divinity but all saw clearly, when the sun was turned to darkness, the veil of the temple torn asunder; the rocks rent in twain; and the buried dead began to walk the earth.

Second:—Blindness, or inability to place things in their right relation in life, may be caused, by the abnormal development, and wrong application of our perceiving powers. Every young man is endowed with powers to see and to understand to a certain extent. The great responsibility comes in the development of, and applications that are made of these powers. In starting upon the highway of life, the young man comes in contact with certain influences which tend to form a mold for his character, and direct the path in which he

shall travel. He has to contend with the law of heredity; for the influence of a past generation is trickling through his veins. His environment is ever present with him making itself known at every turn. The spirit of the age in which he is living is forever proclaiming: "This is the way walk ye in it." Because of these factors, there is great necessity of coming for guidance to something that is solid, established, that has stood the test of ages, and is recognized the world over as the eternally established standard from heaven. A profound question in the young man's life is: are my heavenly endowed perceiving powers, normally developed and rightly applied. The universal order of things in the human race, expect the development and use of these perceiving powers. If neglected and not developed, man shall surely become a parasite upon the boughs of human society. The fish in Mammoth cave, has lost its eyes, because there was no light in the cave to exercise the sight. Professor Drummond informs us, concerning the *Sacculina*; a minute organism frequently found in the Hermit-Crab. Nature destined it to sail buoyantly upon the face of the ocean; to independently enjoy, and possess the beauty of nature. But with the pauper spirit of a parasite, it embedded itself in the crab, and sucked its nourishment from it. From disuse, its mem-

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bers gradually dropped off; and now its glorious destiny is lost in this poor degenerate parasite. It can no longer enjoy the ocean billows. Its opportunity is past. It pursued the wrong course, and now its natural endowments are gone. Man's natural endowments must be developed; must be exercised, or they will shrink, shrivel, and be but mere shadows of what they are capable of becoming. Guard against the neglect of the development of those qualities of the soul which will enable you to see far into things; and seeing things in their right relationship. Guard with equal alertness against the wrong application, when you do develop these powers. The young man who came where Jesus Christ was developed his, but he allowed himself to be controlled entirely by inherent natural tendencies, and outside factors. A father left his invalid daughter at home as he took a far journey into the bosom of nature. His mission was, to explore a coal field for commercial investment. It was at that season of the year when nature was in the height of her glory. Upon returning home, the invalid girl asked him, if he saw the grandeur of nature. He replied, no. Asked if he saw "the cattle upon a thousand hills"; the flowers blooming; the full fledged foliage of nature; the birds by their nests giving expression to the overflowing gratitude of instinct; he replied, no. Asked if he

saw the marvelous works of nature robing her in the heights of splendor, revealing the wonderful operations of a mysterious power; he replied, no. Whereupon, the girl asked him what he did see, he replied: "nothing but coal." He passed through it all. It met his gaze, but he could not see for he was blind. Having eyes he could not see because of the abnormal development, and wrong application of his divinely endowed perceiving powers. So it was with this young man who came to Jesus Christ asking, "what must I do to inherit eternal life." The Saviour placed the matter clearly before him but he could not see.

Third:—Man remains in a condition of blindness, because of his inability to surmount obstacles and hindrances. This young man desired to follow Jesus but the obstacle that intervened was too great to surmount; and he decided to remain as he was. Remember, my dear young sir, the problem of encountered obstacles in attaining to an ideal. The way to great heights in life is paved with rough boulders and scraggy pebbles. For a knowledge of the ups and downs of the way to the Celestial City, read John Bunyan's "The Pilgrim's Progress." When blind Bartimæus, heard that the Saviour was near, the first obstacle he had to contend with was: to accept upon the testimony of others, that "Jesus of Nazareth was passing by."

He had considerable circumstantial evidences to confirm this statement. The Saviour was beyond his sight, and the only thing he had to stand upon was circumstantial evidences and faith. Here stood a man in great darkness; he took chances on surmounting the obstacle, and he won. The next obstacle he had to overcome was, the discouraging words of other people. At the top of his voice he persisted in crying out "Jesus thou son of David have mercy upon me." The multitude demanded that this man be kept quiet. He was asked to hold his peace. His soul was set upon a great object and a high ideal. He received no encouragement to help him along. He only heard the adverse criticism of those with whom he came in contact. With his trust in God, he knew that he was right, and no jeers of fellow man could silence him. In the face of obstacles, he held his ideal before him, he surmounted the difficulties, and won the day. Still another obstacle that Bartimæus had to surmount was: to surrender his opportunity for a large collection by begging from the multitude passing by on this special occasion. A fourth obstacle was, that in his darkness, he had to elbow his way through the multitude intervening between him and the Saviour. By the spirit of determination, and boundless faith in Jesus of Nazareth, he surmounted all these obstacles and received his

sight.

The Red Sea; a vast and howling wilderness; forty years of wandering and extreme privation, stood between Israel and the "Promised Land." They had to be surmounted, or the Jordan could not be crossed. Paul was as blind to the proposition put up to him by Jesus Christ as was this young man because of an obstacle that intervened. But when the scales fell from his eyes on the Damascus road, he no longer had any trouble in seeing Jesus. He was extremely zealous in upholding the master passion of his life; which was fidelity to God and to the Old Dispensation. The proposition of Jesus Christ followed him wherever he went. He was conscientious, but he could not see; at last the scales were removed, and now he has no trouble in seeing Jesus. Spiritual blindness is caused by a weakened spiritual will power allowing material things to come in between the soul and God. This was identically what happened the young man who came to Jesus Christ asking about eternal life. An obstacle intervened and he did not have the power to surmount it. He was satisfied with what he had. He could not see that he needed anything else. He remained in his condition of blindness, and is eternally lost.

As we have this far considered the young man of our scripture narrative, we behold him deeply

embedded in the idea of self-sufficiency. He was told what to do, but he could not see clear enough, to enable him to change from his own notions and ideas. He had made one thing the pivotal point, and master passion of his life, and he could not see that there was anything else in all the world that was worthy of taking the place of that one thing.

THE SECOND STAGE

SOMETHING WANTING

THE second stage in this young man's life was, when he began to realize that there was something lacking. This was the most fortunate moment in all his life. He no doubt was the son of a Pharisee and aimed at great perfection in religion. When Jesus Christ told him to keep the commandments, he said: "all these have I kept from my youth." He no doubt, was following the religious teachings of his day; but he came to a time when he felt that there was something lacking in the routine of his daily life. The "Prodigal Son" left his home and went into a far country, to see the ways of the world. He no doubt thought this necessary to broaden himself beyond the confines of a Jewish race, and to become wise in the ways of the world. He did not travel far until he was accosted by a group of young men who informed him that they had been on the road a long time, and could show him the "ropes" as very few could. The prodigal had departed from the example of religious parents; from the Bible and prayer; from the synagogue and the sabbath; from sacrificing to God; and from giving of his worldly possessions to the cause of religion and the poor. The young man who turns his back upon all these, and plunges into the temptations

and attractions of the world, must possess character of extraordinary strength if he does not go the way that the Prodigal was led into by his newly found associates. With great recklessness he wasted the portion that the father gave him until it was all gone. He found the path of the prodigal to be extremely gratifying in the beginning, and for a time; but that the end thereof was misery and destruction. He woke up one morning to find that his money was gone, his companions gone back on him, and his reputation such that the best young people did not care to associate with him. Like "Lot" standing upon the outskirts of the burning plain, stripped of all his earthly possessions; so stood he, stripped of practically all that the heavenly and earthly fathers had endowed him with. He joined himself to a citizen of that "Far Country," who sent him to do the lowest work that a Jew could be called upon to do; to feed hogs, and to eat the husks that they did eat. One day, as he was down in the lowest strata of human existence, he came to himself, and realized that there was something lacking in his life, which he should possess. The most fortunate moment in a young man's life is, when he comes to himself, and realizes that there is something lacking which he should possess. Actuated by this realization, the prodigal came to the Father, and the result we

know. So the young man who came where Jesus Christ was realized that there was something lacking.

A young man stood at the beginning of the journey of life. The morning was fair, with splendid indications of a bright day. Friends were upon all sides, and servants in attendance. The road seemed paved with bricks of gold. With the awakening of the grandest elements of his life, the young man said: I shall pursue, and never cease, until I have realized the crown of life. Bidding farewell to friends and associations, he began the journey which proved so hard and tedious. He traveled far, and into many avenues. First he saw, at some distance off his road, standing upon an elevation, a palace of such magnificence and grandeur, that it was entirely beyond the power of the human mind to grasp, and of human words to describe. He noticed that mostly all traveling this road, turned aside to it. Across the arch of the main entrance was written, in letters of gold and ivory, the word "Pleasure." The lure of the palace was practically beyond the power of the human mind to reject. He must enter, for here he said, I may find the crown of life. He was highly welcomed, and the servants seemed extremely anxious. All the inmates of this place seemed to be enjoying themselves to the full; with

the exception of an occasional one, who seemed to have the appearance of great disappointment. They had gormandized to the full upon the entire contents of the palace, and now are looking upon it all in disgust. He wonders how these things can be. Upon all sides were pleasures that ministered to all the senses. Here was all that the ear could desire in exquisite music, and rare sounds. The eye fell upon the great master productions of the world in art. Woman was at the height of her glory, and he wondered if some were not angels. Choice wines flowed in great abundance; and all the base inclinations of life were gratified to the full. He wondered what life on earth could desire more than this. As time rolled on, and the sparkling lustre that dazzled his eyes at the beginning began to fade, he recalled the discontented ones whom he saw there at the beginning. He informed his new associates that he felt that there was something lacking in his life which led him to start out; and which he thought the palace would supply; but alas, it is not here. He bade them farewell, vowing that he would never again return. As he journeyed on, he saw a group of buildings, all of ancient architecture. A man at the entrance thereto beckoned him to come this way. He listened to the call and entered this institution of learning. He first gained a master

knowledge of the surface facts of the world; a complete knowledge of astronomy, and of the great system of the universe. He then mastered a knowledge of all philosophies and theories, reaching far out beyond man's knowledge based upon material things. He familiarized himself with all the researches of the scientific world. He went into all the avenues of human conduct. He searched theology and religious knowledge to their greatest depths. And at last that he might have a perfect weapon with which to handle all his knowledge, he mastered literature. Surely, he said this will bring me to the pinnacle of life. Time rolled by. The walls of this great institution began to grow stale. He still felt that there was something lacking in his life; and that the crown thereof was not to be found in a master knowledge of all the facts of the universe. He journeyed on. In his wandering, he discovered that man had established a standard of value, to be used as a means of exchange. He learned that the great barrier standing between man and possession of the things of this world was a lack of this means of exchange. He reasoned that if he had abundance of this means of exchange, he could procure whatever he desired of the things of life. He set himself to the accumulation of wealth. He was extremely successful; and became wealthy. Now

he said, there is nothing in life but what I can get. He called about him a great council of advisors to assist him in securing everything that money could buy to make life complete. Under these conditions he lived for a time. Again there is a vacancy which this abundance cannot supply. He dismissed every one of his advisors saying, "miserable councillors are you all." He learned the sad lesson that the crown of life could not be bought. He journeyed on. Night overtook him. He strolled down a lane to a light in the window of a house at the foot of a hill. The night was wet and disagreeable. The sound of the rain and the moaning wind reminded him of misery on the outside, while within all was cheerful and pleasant. The door was responded to by the master of the house, who greeted him with a smile and a hearty handshake. He introduced himself as a wandering stranger, going up and down the earth, seeking the crown of life; for he had long since realized that there was something lacking in his life. This home happened to be one of those in which the shadow of heaven came down to earth. The children engaged in their games and fun, while the older people discussed the current topics of the day. Then, all engaged in the singing of popular songs, and sacred music. Then, came the kneeling at the family altar for divine worship; followed by an ex-

change of “Goodnights,” as all retired to the peaceful slumbers of nature. The young man was so impressed with the blessedness of the situation, that he felt, that perhaps after all the crown of life was a home on earth, let down out of heaven from God. So, he established one of his own. Happiness reigned upon all sides as the years rolled by. Loving innocent children climbed upon his back, ran to meet him in the street when they saw him coming, and was greeted at the door by a modest loving wife, who was the music and poetry of the home. All the sorrows and worries of his dealings with a hard commercial world were drowned in the glories of a little paradise upon earth. As he from time to time contemplated this scene, he was impressed to the last degree with the glories of a heaven blessed home. He asked: what lack I yet; a voice whispered down the aisles of his soul: nothing. In his haste he said: I have found the crown of life. But alas, the scene is changed, as the years rolled on with the pendulum of time. He felt that there was still something lacking. Accompanied by his wife and family, he resumed the journey. They traveled over many and wearysome roads. At last he arrived at a place called Mount-Sinai. Here he learned of Moses and the prophets; and discovered a people with the greatest system of religious ethics that the

world ever heard of. He said, perhaps, the crown of life is to be found by living under the Ten Commandments of Moses. He studied the teachings, and fundamental principles of the Old Testament, until he was recognized as an expert in this line. He lived and practiced this knowledge hoping that it would bring to him the yearning of his soul. Time rolled on, and his life seemed contented. But, he eventually began to realize that the foundation was decaying from underneath this structure; and again he began to realize that his efforts were all in vain. He learned of a man who came from Galilee, and startled the world by his marvelous deeds. He taught that His mission to the world was, to supply the needs of humanity, and give eternal life. This young man came running where He was crying out: "what must I do to inherit eternal life." The Nazarene looked upon him with a smile, and said, you have been seeking through the wrong avenues; you have depended too much upon your own strength. Your life has been a success. Your record demands the admiration of the world; but you missed the path that leads to those mountain peaks, which will give man the greatest glories of this world; and enable him to develop into intellectual attainments above his day and generation. Sell all that you are holding on to, and upon which you are building,

and come and follow me, and you shall surely find the crown of life. He looked back over his accumulations, and great earthly possessions. He answered, No. He gave up the search. He now spent the balance of his days in seclusion, ever feeling that there was something lacking in his life. He died, and never realized the crown of life, because, he refused to pay the price.

When chill November's surly blast
Made fields and forests bare,
One evening, as I wandered forth
Along the banks of Ayr,
I spied a man whose aged step
Seemed weary worn with care;
His face was furrowed o'er with years,
And hoary was his hair.

Young stranger, whither wanderest thou?
Began the reverend sage;
Does thirst of wealth thy step constrain,
Or youthful pleasure's rage?
Or haply, prest with cares and woes,
Too soon thou hast begun
To wander forth with me to mourn
The miseries of man.

O man! while in thy early years,
How prodigal of time!
Misspending all thy precious hours,
Thy glorious youthful prime!
Alternate follies take the sway;
Licentious passions burn;
Which tenfold force gives nature's law,
That man was made to mourn.

Look not alone on youthful prime,
Or manhood's active might;
Man then is useful to his kind,
Supported is his right:
But see him on the edge of life,
With cares and sorrows worn;
Then age and want—oh! ill-matched pair!—
Show man was made to mourn.

Many and sharp the numerous ills
Inwoven with our frame!
More pointed still we make ourselves—
Regret, remorse, and shame!
And man, whose heaven-erected face
The smiles of love adorn,
Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn!

If I'm designed yon lordling's slave—
By nature's law designed—
Why was an independent wish
E'er planted in my mind?
If not, why am I subject to
His cruelty or scorn?
Or why has man the will and power
To make his fellow mourn?

Yet, let not this too much my son,
Disturb thy youthful breast;
This partial view of humankind
Is surely not the last!
The poor, oppressed, honest man,
Had never, sure, been born,
Had there not been some recompense
To comfort those that mourn.

—*Robert Burns.*

THE THIRD STAGE

A VISION OF ETERNAL LIFE

THE third stage in this young man's life was, when he came to Jesus Christ inquiring. His realization of something lacking, became centralized upon a vision of eternal life; and he came running to Jesus Christ for help. "What must I do to inherit eternal life." I have a clear vision of its importance, and I wish you would show me the way. He was aroused from his condition of blindness to feel that there was something lacking; and then he saw eternal life looming up before him as a vision in the night. It was this vision that actuated him to come to Jesus Christ inquiring. A large amount of the failures of life is due, not so much to man's inability to see; but to his neglect of moving to action when he does see clearly and with conviction. It was the power of vision, moved to action that enabled Joseph to hear the rattling of the bones, and see the giant of famine stalking through the land; and moved him to make the necessary preparation for the future seven years of want. It was this power of vision that enabled Isaiah to look down over the flats of seven centuries, and there in the dawn of

a new era in civilization, like the rays of the morning sun beheld the effulgent glories of the Redeemer of the world, the saviour of men, and the Son of God. He was moved to action, as no one could only he who had the weight of an enormous vision pressing down upon him. It was the power of vision that enabled Moses to refuse to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and choose affliction with the people of God; for by vision he was able to look beyond the murky Jordan of death, and there behold the land streaming with milk and honey. It was the power of vision that enabled Daniel to triumph, resist temptation, and bidding defiance to the worshipper of the Babylonian gods meditatively walked to his humble place of abode and with a vision filling his soul of the land beyond the desert, prayed to the great God of the universe, with his face set towards Jerusalem. It was the power of vision moved to action, that enabled Solomon to go five days journey from Damascus into the Syrian desert, and there in the face of towering obstacles, built the city of "Tadmor." With the burning sun of the desert pouring down upon him; the clouds of sand blowing about him; no water nor timber in sight, he built this magnificent city. Going on three thousand years in the future, excavations of the ruins of that city, show its towers, pillars and temples to be next

to the master architecture of Greece and Rome. In the great desert of life, will your vision and response thereto, be such as to enable you to build such a magnificent temple, that in the years to come the rising generations will look to the ruins of a mighty life that was lived centuries in the past, and be able to say,—well done. It was the power of a noble vision, and pursuit of the same, that enabled Abraham Lincoln to throw down the tripod and transit, that he might be enabled to convince the world that a naiton was conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition, that all men were created equal. I am impressed by the splendid vision that this young man had of something beyond this world, and the effort he put forth in pursuing the same, only to fail because of the obstacle he encountered.

Young man; in the pursuit of vision, you will have three factors to contend with. The first of these is, fellow man. Remember the adverse influence of life's unworthy associates. The shores of time are strewn with human wrecks, that once had bright prospects for the future, but because of unworthy association never attained to the noble ideals they had set up as the goal and object of their lives. The second factor is the personal equation, or self. Guard against unworthy personal inclinations, and improper worldly tenden-

cies. Here is where the downfall of this young man took place. The third factor you will have to reckon with is, the divine. You will encounter Him, not in the whirlwind, and the storms of life, but through the whisperings of that still small voice in the aisles of the soul. Guard against going upon the wings of vision into the land of fancy. Make sure that the inclinations of your soul are well founded. Consult reliable authorities. Solicit the opinion of worthy friends; and sift the matter out between your own soul and God before you start.] A dog while crossing a bridge looked over into the clear water below. There it saw the shadow of a bone carried in its own mouth. This dog was ambitious, and plunged into the water to grasp the second bone; and in doing so dropped the one it had. It swam to the shore wet, dripping, and disappointed. There it sat upon the bank whining for the lost bone. It now realized that it had lost the real bone while grasping at a shadow.] A child standing by its mother saw a beautiful rainbow in the heavens. It vehemently demanded of the mother to give it the rainbow. The mother tried to reason with the child, but all efforts failed, as the child was bent on receiving the rainbow to play with. She called upon the maid, to bring its playthings; but the weeping child hurled them all down, and cried for the rainbow.

The mother called for its diamond studded bracelet, which the child was taught to highly value; but it was flung to the floor, and the child cried itself to sleep in the mother's arms, because she would not give it the rainbow to play with. Had that child the power to travel through space, it would come to the regions of the rainbow, and upon trying to grasp it, would learn that it was nothing but vapor; and that the vision from a distance was entirely misleading. Make sure before you start. This young man who came to Jesus Christ stood upon the solid foundation when he had a clear vision of, and an eager desire to possess eternal life. In his past life, and even yet to an injurious extent, he had been grasping for the shadow; and building upon the rainbow colors of abundant worldly possessions. Sad as the tragic ending of this young man's life was, yet, we must give him credit for a time in his life when he soared to the most sublime elevations thereof and had a clear vision of the importance of eternal life. The noblest ideal of a man's life is, a clear vision of the glories of eternity, with an eager spirit to pursue the same.

Let the young man realize that, while with the swift stream of time the rolling years are receding, never to rise again, the world is marching on towards a transformation that shall constitute a

new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness; and in the ages to come, there shall arise a generation that shall look upon the lamb lying down with the wolf, the sword beaten into plough shares, and the sun of righteousness shining never to set again. Then standing upon the shores of eternity, robed in dazzling white, then with glorified pride in your heart, and praises to God upon your lips, as you look down over ages, be able to say: thank God for the vision He gave me of eternal life, which led me to fight a good fight, run a good race, and to finish the work He gave me to do. Now there is a crown of glory for me to wear through the eternities that are to roll on and on, never, no never to end.

THE FOURTH STAGE

ONE THING LACKING

THE fourth stage in this young man's life was, when Jesus told him that there was one thing lacking. Already, the young man felt that there was something wanting, and this led him to come to Jesus. He felt the excellencies of his earthly qualifications; but realized that he did not possess that which Jesus Christ was advocating for lost humanity, and a world in distress. He felt that he did not possess the essential qualifications to possess the eternal life which the Saviour was advocating; and so he came running, and asking what must I do to inherit the same. Jesus seeing the extent of his earthly accumulations; the splendid qualifications of his character, the impulse of his soul for eternal life; seeing him so near, and yet so far; looking "upon him," the divine eye piercing into the deepest recesses of his soul; loved him, and with the smile of affection, said: "one thing thou lackest." To the eyes of the outside world, he was a model young man. The Hebrew standard of morality, and religion was the highest that the world ever heard of outside of christianity. When all the great fundamental principles thereof were presented to this young man, he was able to

say: "all these have I kept from my youth, what lack I yet." As we travel along the Bible path from Genesis to Revelation; when we approach this young man we are startled to find in him another victim of, the Bible tragedy of the one thing lacking. Away back in the garden of Eden, man is living with his life fashioned after that of the eternal God. Everything is paradise, and nothing is lacking. In a short time we find that the scene is changed, and man is driven from the garden. Over the ages, and out into the vast expanse of time, we behold man struggling. We see strife and contention in operation upon all sides. Pain, sorrow and death are found to be so indelibly written into the constitution of man, that pessimistic philosophers in ages past concluded, "that man was made to mourn." Famine and pestilence periodically arise; bloody wars mow down the human race from time to time. We ask for the cause of all this woe and misery in the world; the answer comes down the pathway of the centuries—one thing lacking in the Garden of Eden.

Moses—the great progenitor of the Hebrew race, is called upon to go down into Egypt and liberate the great Hebrew race from slavery, and extreme bondage. He was an instrument in the hand of the eternal God. He performed miracles. He led Israel through the Red Sea; and surmount-

ed the extraordinary difficulties peculiar to the life of a nation wandering in a wilderness for nearly half a century. His life was a model for the ages to come. He stands out with great prominence as the most towering figure in a period of four thousand years. The one goal and great desire of his life was, that he would be permitted to cross the Jordan, and see the "promised land." As he came to the eastern side of the Jordan, and the end of his life approaching, he went up into a mountain peak, where he could see the "promised land" over to the Mediterranean sea, and there we hear him pleading with God saying:—"I pray thee, let me go over and see the land that is beyond the Jordan; that goodly mountain, and Lebanon." God refused this earnest pleading of his great servant. Why? because there was one thing lacking in his past life; and that scar in the life of Moses could never be healed, so as to enable him to achieve the grandest ideal of all his life. We behold this sorrowful spectacle in the life of one of the towering figures of the ages, and we lament the Bible tragedy of the one thing lacking.

(David; we read, was a man after God's own heart. Yet, subject to the infirmities and weaknesses of human life. In the first part of his career, we find the great subject which we may well call:—The Ascending Glory of David's Life. The

first step in this ascending glory was, David's supreme faithfulness to the reality. He would not tolerate insult and defiance to the armies of the living God. He accepts the challenge of the Philistine giant; and when the victory was won, he declined the honor that a nation in distress would bestow upon a successful general. He preferred placing the glory where it rightfully belonged, in order to convince the world that the God of Israel was the supreme God.

When Saul's wonderful armor was placed upon him, he declined to wear it, saying, that it was untried, artificial, and not what God intended for him to wear. Thus showing his fidelity to reality. The second step in the ascending glory of David's life was, the supreme tie of friendship which bound him and Jonathan together. We look over the annals of time, and through the pages of history for great instances of true fellowship, but nowhere do we find a more subline example of true friendship than that which bound David and Jonathan together. A third step in this ascending glory, was, the noble spirit of the desert. The enemy boiling from the spirit of revenge, is pursuing David's life. He fled to the desert. He declined an opportunity for a civil war in the nation. Here the depths of his soul yearned for the water of the "well of Bethlehem which is by the gate."

When this water was brought to him, he poured it out as a libation to God; showing that there was nothing in life so dear to him as to stand between his soul and God. Here, while he was being pursued by his enemy, who would not hesitate for a moment to take his life with the first opportunity; David refrained from drawing his sword for the destruction of this arch enemy on two different occasions. The last step in the ascending glory of David's life was, when he was lifted to the sublime position of king of the united realm of all Israel; and the noble incidents associated with that reign. We thus scan his life as he is scaling the heights of honor, glory, and fame. As we view this picture of a great and a successful life, we ask the question: was there anything lacking in the life of David. Alas, the scene is changed, and we behold David descending from these glorious heights of life; and we shall ultimately find that the decline and fall of David's life was due to "one thing lacking." Here our attention may be directed to The Fading Glory of David's Life. By one act, he is guilty of a treacherous murder; of humiliating a woman; of invading the sacred precincts of a home; and of lifting his hand in the most base manner against a true friend. In the fading glory of David's life; our attention is directed, first to the awful tragedy of a stupefied and an unwakened

conscience. The deed he was about to commit was the very incarnation of baseness and brutality. Yet, David's conscience was stupefied and unawakened. The fading glory of his life was also due, to the abiding consequences of God's broken laws. A prophet is sent to break the news to David; and to remove the scales from his eyes. He saw the error of his way; but it was too late. The deed was done, and retribution must follow such a base violation of the laws of heaven. Earth moistened with overflowing tears of repentance, may secure man and God's forgiveness; but the mighty oceans dried up, and their great depths filled to the brim with the briny tears of sorrow, can never undo the deed, nor remove the stain. The scar remains. Years ago, a hunter at the dawn of day found himself seated in a lonely valley among the distant hills. It was at that season of the year, when the wild geese migrated from the north to the south. Upon former occasions, they were known to alight in this secluded place. To his delight, the hunter's eye fell upon a lonely goose. The bird was shot; and upon examination, it was found to have had at one time a broken wing. Perhaps, the mother goose trampled upon it while it was a little gooselet in the nest. Nature pursued its course, and the wing was healed; but, alas the scar was left. In the coming years, when

the time arrived for the flight to the sunny lands of the south, this bird was unable to follow its companions, and fell by the wayside, because of the once broken pinion. David repented, but the scar was left. He died as the fool dieth, with vanity of vanities written upon all his past glories. In him we behold the falling of beauty into darkness, and of glory into dust. We behold the awful consequence of a single sinful desire and we have our attention vividly directed to the Bible tragedy of the one thing lacking.

On Tuesday evening of the Passion week, Jesus is resting upon the Mount of Olives. He is surrounded by His Disciples. He is giving them instructions concerning the judgment, and His second coming. Here the parable of the ten Virgins was given. Its purpose was to show them how inadequate a full, and almost perfect preparation would prove, should it be found that there was one thing lacking. The scene is that of an oriental marriage. Ten virgins had made special preparation for attending the great festivities of the marriage. They must have torches, and oil to supply them when burning. They all made what seemed to be every necessary preparation; and left their homes for the direction from which the bridegroom was to come. We are told that the bridegroom tarried; and that the virgins slumbered and

slept, while the torches were left burning. We are told that five of these virgins were wise, while the other five were foolish. Wherein consisted the foolishness of the five virgins? In that there was one thing lacking in their extensive preparation. This was the lesson that Jesus desired to impress upon the minds of His disciples. These ten virgins were all alike in that they all made great preparation. They all had the same desire to honor the bridegroom. They all had the same outward appearance of having made the same preparation. They all slumbered and slept; and they all went the same distance to meet the honored guest. But when the hour of the true testing arrived, it was found that in the preparation of the foolish Virgins, there was one thing lacking. They hastened to adjust the neglect, and then hastened to the great marriage feast; but alas, the doors were shut, and down over the centuries rings the sad anthem, as a warning to all generations—late, late too late, you cannot enter now. As we read this sad narrative, our attention is again riveted upon the Bible tragedy of the one thing lacking.

In the third chapter of John's gospel, we have the narrative concerning "Nicodemus." A man greatly confounded by the perplexities of the new principles of righteousness propounded by the Saviour of the world. This man was a great ad-

herent to the principles of righteousness as advocated by the Law and the Prophets. He was a man of high standards, and excellent qualifications; and like the young man of our narrative, he came to Jesus by night inquiring about eternal life. In Nicodemus, we have a man who, when all was ended in the Saviour's career, came with a companion and took down the body of Jesus from the Cross, and placed it in the tomb. In him, we have before us a man who saw in Jesus the greatest of all teachers, and firmly believed that he was sent from God. In him we have a man who, when nature was robed in the darkness of night, the earth baptized with the dew from the star-bespangled heavens; the silence of nature broken only by the note of the Whip-poor-will upon the banks of the distant Jordan, came across the hills of Palestine that he might be able to sit at the feet of Jesus and grasp His mysterious teachings concerning eternal life. In him we have a member of the highest ecclesiastical Jewish court; and thus occupying a first place in the church of his day. In him we have a man highly educated, for he must know the Bible with great exactness, or he could not be a member of that court. In him we have a great reformer; standing for equity, justice, and right; for he said "doth our court condemn a man without being tried." Yet notwithstanding all these excellent

qualifications, we hear Jesus saying unto him: verily, verily I say unto you, you are lost, you must be born again. The Bible tragedy of the one thing lacking.

It is a matter of maritime record, that some time ago, the captain of a passenger ship, while in mid-ocean, discovered that his vessel was on fire beyond control. A great storm was raging. He at once sent out the distress signal. All ships within a reasonable distance, picking up this signal, hastened to the rescue. Before dusk, eleven great ocean liners were assembled about the burning ship; but the storm rendered them helpless. Attempts were made to lower boats from the burning ship, but these were smashed, and the occupants were drowned. Rafts, were sent adrift from the surrounding ships, but these missed the mark, and hope was lost again. A boat from one of the rescue ships, heroically battled with the waves for three and a half hours, but was compelled to return with only three oars intact. One hundred and twenty-five lives were lost in attempting to get away from the burning ship. All night, the remaining five hundred were huddled in the bow of the ship with the fire which meant death, creeping towards them inch by inch. The situation was desperate. One man was seen to kiss his wife and children, and then threw them overboard; then,

throwing up his hands, he was seen to hurl himself to instant death, among the angry waves. Here was gathered the finest collection of ocean liners, ever assembled in mid-ocean. Here was assembled the greatest rescue equipment ever gathered about a burning ship far out at sea. Yet, this great equipment stood by helpless, lamenting that there was one thing lacking. That one thing was, Oil, to calm the turbulent sea. Early in the scene, a wireless call was sent broadcast for an ocean "tanker." The answer came back that she was coming. With the break of day, the oil ship was seen upon the horizon. Arriving upon the scene; her pumps were turned on full force. In a short time, the sea around the burning ship was calm; and the five hundred were easily rescued. The equipment of life, to meet the exigencies of a great emergency, may be the very incarnation of perfection; and yet, prove helpless, if the one great essential thing is lacking.

The young man of our narrative is an outstanding example, and a warning to all followers of Jesus Christ; as well as to all religious organizations; and to all young men in the journey of life; to guard against model equipment with the one thing lacking. We would all do well to pause and profoundly meditate upon the great lesson that the wise book is designed to convey to us in its

great tragedy of the one thing lacking. "Jesus looking upon him, loved him, and said, one thing thou lackest."

THE FIFTH STAGE

CHRIST IN THE BALANCE

THE fifth stage in this young man's life was : When he stood face to face with the urgent request from Jesus Christ, to follow Him. Ah, what did this mean ? It meant a great deal. It meant the same thing to him as it does to you and to me. What does it mean to follow Christ. There are a great many lines in which we could direct our thoughts with this idea ; but I invite your attention to a consideration of three things involved with great prominence, in following Christ. The first of these is : That you are to demonstrate to the world that you are a follower. The Saviour said : "no man lights a lamp, and then puts it under a bushel." He also said : "I am the light of the world," if any man follow after me he shall not walk in darkness, but he shall have the light of life." If we are true followers, and real ambassadors of Jesus Christ, we must let our lights so shine as to glorify our Father who is in heaven ; and demonstrate to the world that we are soldiers of the Cross. The soldier of the army wears a uniform, not only to show that he is in the service to protect the interest of his country ; but that uniform also shows, the country to which he belongs. The member of a lodge wears a button, or a

badge, to demonstrate that he belongs to that organization. Is the great christian organization, advocating the universal brotherhood of man; and pointing out the way to eternal salvation, is that organization so light, trivial, and unbeneficial in our estimation as to lead us to conceal and deny our membership. Some time ago, on stepping from a train, on a Sunday morning, in one of the leading cities of the United States; a man was seen standing at the far end of the platform, handing out leaflets to all the passengers from the incoming train. As the procession from this train came to an end, he was seen to hasten to another platform to meet those from another train just arriving. Before receiving one of these leaflets, I wondered what they were. As he handed me one I read: "This is the Lord's day; will you not put forth an effort to attend one of His houses of worship in this city." I looked the man over. I watched him for a time. He had all the appearance of a man from the highest ranks of the social and commercial world. He transacted this item of business with the same alacrity, courtesy, and apparent delight as he would that of one of the large department stores of the city. I there and then saw as I never did before, the beauty of a man from the commercial world demonstrating to the outside world that he was a follower of the

Lord Jesus Christ. This is one of the prime factors in Christian discipleship. The young man who desires to triumph in life; be victorious in death; and win a crown of glory in the world beyond, let him not refrain from demonstrating to the world that he is a follower of Jesus Christ.

The second thing that we must do is: Not to follow Christ “afar off.” It matters not what we are doing in life, but there are different degrees of interest and intensity, which we can put into our work. One of the maxims of life is, concentration of interest and effort. Anything that is worth doing, do not follow it afar off. To look upon an object from a distance is to behold that object with dim outlines, and not clear-cut. Draw up close to business. Get close to your ideal in life. When the Saviour was being led to the Cross, those whom He had selected to be a center around which would radiate the kingdom He established had fled. Where were they? Had they gone back to Galilee, to their respective former occupations? No; they were still following Him; but they were following Him afar off, to see what would happen to their great leader and master. They were following at too great a distance to be of any account in this critical time in the experiences of Christ. Today there are many degrees of following, among the soldiers of the Cross.

Some are following shoulder to shoulder with the Saviour. Some are following Him a short distance to the rear. Some, so as to see the Master as He is about to turn the corner, but very careful that the spectator will not recognize them as belonging to the Galilean band. Others are following at too great a distance to be of any account to the Saviour, or the Saviour to them. This young man when he came to Jesus inquiring, no doubt entertained the idea that he could follow Him in a manner other than that which the Saviour presented to him. His manner of following would be that of a distance—afar off. Jesus did not compromise on this score. He did not suggest that he hold on to all that he had and follow. The true following of Christ will not mix in with the mammonism of the world. You cannot be a true soldier of the Cross, while following the Saviour afar off.

The third factor in following Christ is: To live close to His teaching, and to the example of His life. Before the coming of Christ, man was groping in the darkness, striving to find the pathway in which he should travel. In the ages of the past, standards were established for man to follow as the way of righteousness; only to prove a failure when given the final test. Man was eagerly listening for the voices "from behind saying, this is the

way, walk ye in it." There was no sure and lasting foundation of righteousness upon which to build. Into the midst of a world in great perplexity, the Saviour appeared; and by His life and teaching, gave to struggling humanity that foundation for which the ages of the past were seeking. He called upon men to come unto Him, and follow in the pathway He had unfolded. His illustration of the relation, that should exist between Him and His followers was, that of the vine and the branches. They were to be the avenue through which His life and teaching would find expression in the ages to come. They were to bear fruit of what He was and taught. They were to be the great advocates of the brotherhood of man. They were not to enter into a controversy with an opponent, but rather vanish out of their sight; and under the most favorable conditions possible, in the spirit of love, to continue the propagation of the principles of the kingdom of heaven. They were to retire to the mountain side, and secluded places, and there spend whole nights in prayer and communication with heaven. One thing the true follower of Christ must do; and that is, to hold on to the teachings of Jesus, and the example of His life. Let go of this, and you are simply speculating, as to the demands of the kingdom of heaven. This young man who came to Jesus Christ asking

for the price of eternal life, learned what it meant to follow Him. He must demonstrate to the world that he belonged to the Galilean band. He must render a whole hearted service. He must put the teaching and example of Jesus in place of the Law and the Prophets. He must renounce that master passion of his life. He must sell all to follow Him. He must pay the price. At this stage of the narrative, we leave him face to face with the Saviour, seriously considering the cost of true discipleship.

THE SIXTH STAGE

THE PRICE TOO GREAT

THE final stage in this young man's life was: when he considered the price too great, and refused to pay it. He desired eternal life; he was shown the price; he said, it is too much. All the master achievements of life are bought at a great price. The young man who folds his arms, declining to use his heavenly endowed talents; and not grasp the glorious opportunities of life; and at the same time, expect to become master of the great achievements of his age; that young man is expecting something that is contrary to the laws of the universe; and something which the ages of the past have demonstrated could not be realized through that avenue. The master inventor of the electrical world, was asked to define genius. He replied, that genius was two per cent inspiration, and ninety-eight per cent perspiration. Great talents, and endowments that are born with a man, will become as flowers in the desert, and gems in the dark unfathomed caves of the ocean, if man does not pay the price of the full application of himself, to enable those endowments to unfold themselves to their full ability. That the price must be paid in order to produce results, is a principle true to the world of nature; true in commer-

cial activities; and equally true in the realm of religion. The talipot palm grows tall and majestic, lifting its head above its surroundings. Year by year it is seen to flourish without any indications of blossom or fruit. At the end of forty years it blooms itself to death. Every blossom develops into a nut which falls into the earth and brings forth a little talipot palm. The mother tree at once begins to shrink and shrivel, and eventually crumbles to the earth. A thousand little palm trees are seen to flourish, but the mother has paid the price. In the tombs of Egypt, among the mummies, among the dry and dusty bones of the long forgotten and buried dead; are found grains of the Egyptian wheat. This grain has survived the march of time. While multitudes of the different departments of nature caused to produce and reproduce; living their little day and then perished; while generation rapidly succeed generation; while empires rose and died; for four thousand years, this grain with marvelous tenacity held on to its life principle. At last, when brought to the sunlight and moisture, it expands, and brings forth the blade, the stock, and then the full ear of many grains. With this magnificent product brought forth, we ask for the single grain which survived the ordeal of that long period in the tombs of the dead. We learn that it is no more. To bring

forth this product, it must surrender its very life. It paid the price. The world's largest concrete viaduct, is that of Tunkhannock in northern Pennsylvania. This wonderful piece of concrete construction, was built by the Lackawanna railroad. This corporation sent a force of engineers to labor for months among the hills and ravines of this section to ascertain the feasibility of the contemplated project. After days and months of arduous labor, they returned to the head offices, bringing in the report. Upon one side they laid the saving to the railroad in grade, engine power, and reduction in time of fast trains between New York and Buffalo. Upon the other side they placed the price of the project—\$12,000,000. Thus two items were placed before this railway organization—the project, and the cost. Only one question to answer; shall we pay the price. The contract was let for a viaduct 2375 feet long, 240 feet high. Composed of ten 800 foot, and two 100 foot spans. Today, the Lackawanna is reaping the benefits of this structure, because it paid this enormous price. For centuries, the leading men of the commercial world realized the enormous benefits to the whole world, from a waterway across the Isthmus of Panama, connecting the sea trade of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Since the year 1551 the idea was before the world. Plans were formulated;

companies organized; and work begun, but all efforts proved a failure. In the year 1902 the congress of the United States succeeded in reaching an amicable agreement with the French promoters whose efforts had failed. In magnitude, this project surpassed any one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The cost \$375,000,000. The time to complete the work, twelve to thirteen years. Besides this, an enormous toll of human lives from unfavorable climatic conditions. The work was undertaken; the project completed; and now the world is reaping the benefits, of this wonderful waterway; all because an enormous price was paid.

Hildeberg, says that at the door of the Temple of Fame, stands an angel who whispers to each young candidate for honors: "can you eat crusts; can you wear rags; can you endure blows; can you endure sleepless nights, and laborious days; and bitter jibes, and scorn and shame; If not, avaunt! there is no place for feeblings here." Turner, the great English artist, had chosen Art as the vocation of his life. He at once began to apply himself; only to meet with very poor success. Failure was written in very bold type across the face of all his efforts. The late hours of the night, and the early ones of the morning, found him applying himself to the last ounce of his physical powers, and artistic ability, that he might attain to his

ideal. In the sleepless moments of the midnight hour, from a restless pillow, he is looking out into the darkness of a lightless room beholding in the frame of imagination the majestic productions. He slumbers shedding tears, because of his inability to bring that master production of the imagination into reality upon the canvas. Sketch after sketch is made; until at last the number has reached twenty-seven thousand. Each one was pronounced a failure, and cast aside. At last the art is mastered, of bringing before his soul with profound vividness the distinctive features of the object; and the hand is trained to link with the imagination, and reproduce upon canvas what the soul is gazing upon within. Twenty-seven thousand fruitless sketches; weary hours of sleepless nights; nerves at high tension bordering upon wreckage; years of valuable time without any fruitful results, was a great price to pay. But the ideal is attained; and long after his bones have crumbled to dust, the centuries laud a master artist; and the rising generations hold his memory fresh as they look upon the master product of a master man.

Daniel Webster goes down into the annals of time as one of the master intellects of the American continent, and of the world. He thus stands out because of towering factors, and great pillars

in his life. These factors were not produced without extreme effort. His oratorical powers, were but the product of a great price paid in the extreme application of himself to become such. The soul stirring portions, of his memorable reply to Hayne, were not the product of the moment, but were premeditated as early as twenty years in the past. Master productions, are produced only by profound study; serious meditation; and the extreme application of our heavenly endowed powers. The price must be paid. "Emerson," was filling a large and influential pulpit in the city of Boston; when he had a vision of stepping down to a lower rank, that he might later become, of greater service to his Master, and the cause he represented. He resigned, and went out to a small secluded place, receiving for his service the sum of six hundred dollars a year, to live on. For a time, he actually disappeared; only that he might open up the way to greater heights in the achievements of life. Savonarola, the great religious reformer, was approached by the Pope of Rome, and asked to sell his religious convictions for a certain price. He would be made a cardinal; he would live in a palace, and have gold and silver in abundance. He showed greater strength than Judas of old; he shook his head and said, nay. He endured the privations of life. He endured, beholding from afar

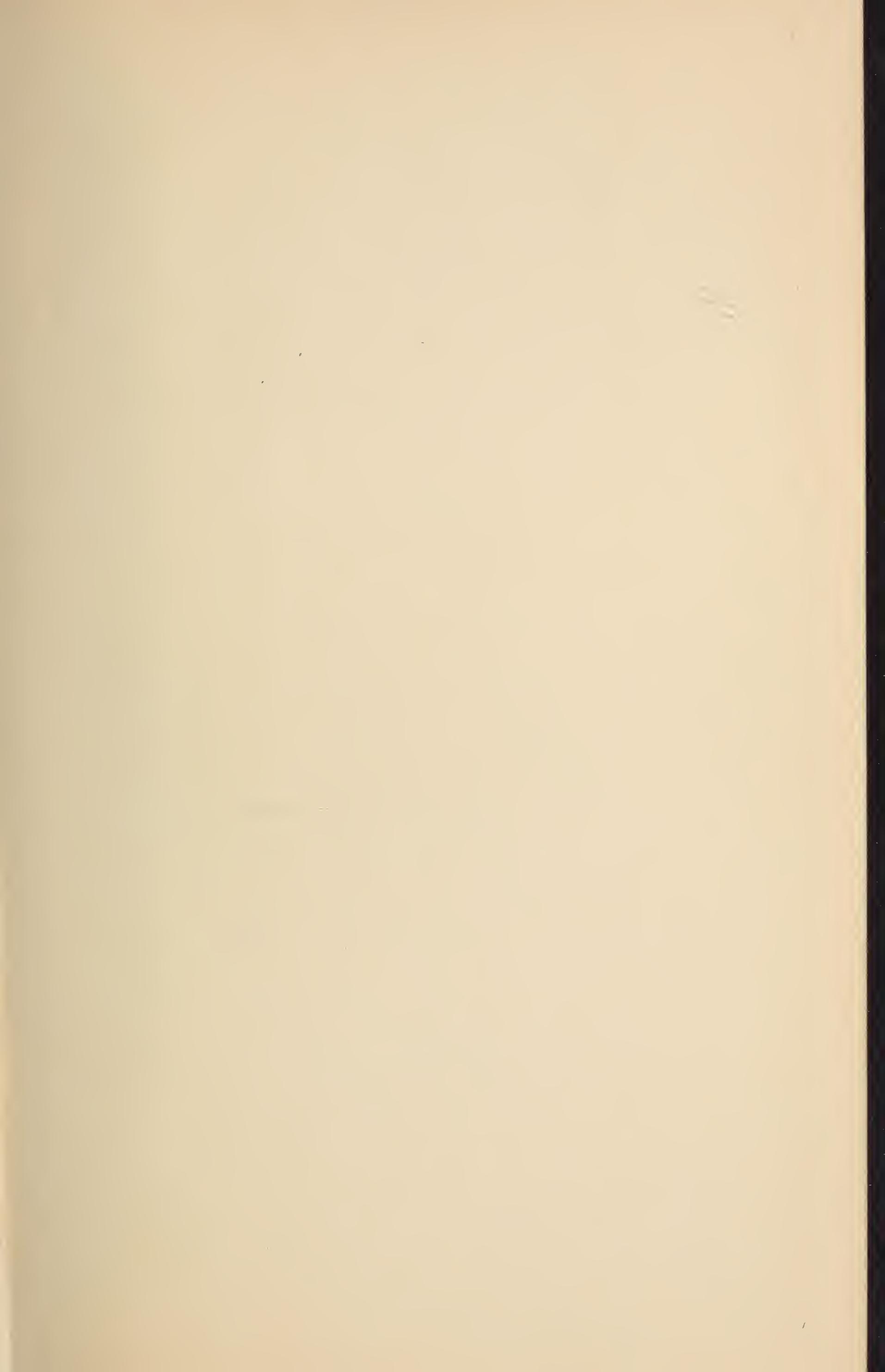
that which was at present invisible. John Bunyan must pay the price of incarceration in Bedford Jail, that the way might be opened for him to give to the world his master book, "The Pilgrim's Progress." The Pilgrim Fathers, and the American leaders of the following generations endured great suffering, and extreme privations. The Civil war placed crape upon the doors of thousands of American homes. But all these privations, and sufferings were necessary in order to produce a country where freedom, equality, and justice would sit forever upon the throne.

Today, at the close of the world war, the world has given a sigh of relief, because the task is over, and the price is paid. The issue at stake, was autocracy, against world democracy. The price paid was twenty-five millions of the human race crippled and dead; and two hundred billions of the world's wealth cast into the junk heap of war. Add to this the millions of sad homes, and broken hearts, and we have the price paid by the twentieth century for the freedom of man, the rights of humanity, and the democracy of the world. Was it not better that one generation should thus pay the price; than to permit the suffering and misery of the ages to come. The burying grounds of the battle fields of Europe with their countless crosses, loom up before us, a marvelous panorama of the

price that was paid. These crosses will crumble to the dust. Over these fields will wave the golden grain, reminding us of the shortness of human memory. Memories of this buried dead will be long forgotten; but the influence of their great achievement so dearly bought, will pass down, far, far into the rising generations, and may be the means of opening up the way for the transformation of this world into a new heaven, and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

In the "Fullness of time," the Saviour came to this world. The condition of the human race was sadly in the need of a transforming power; and the price must be paid. The prince of darkness came where Christ was, in the temptation wilderness, and offered a bribe. Jesus would not sell His honor, religion, and heaven appointed commission. Instead, was willing to pay the price on Calvary's Cross. In the garden, He sweats great drops of blood. He pleads with the Father, "if it be possible let this cup pass from me." He wore the crown, and robe of the jeers and mockery of this world. He bore His cross to the height of calvary. He suffered the agony of the crucifixion. The last moments surrounding His earthly career, were so agonizing, that He is heard to cry out; "My God, My God why hast thou forsaken me." All this was the price paid for the redemption of

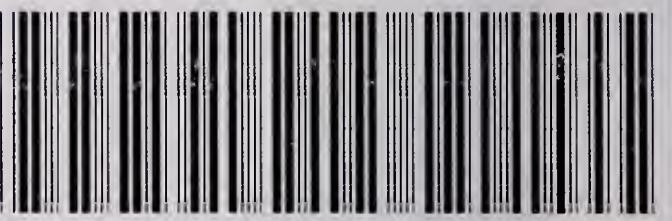
man, and the salvation of the world. The kingdom of heaven is offering the crown of eternal life; but between the soul and that crown, there are many obstacles. No favors are granted. Heaven demands a price, and it must be paid. The young man of this Bible narrative had the way of salvation clearly pointed out to him. He was no longer in doubt as to what to do. He saw his duty clearly but he considered the price too great, and he is lost forever. Young man; I have presented this fund of multiplied illustration to impress upon you the great necessity for paying the price. Consider the matter well.



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